

BEFORE THE PERSONNEL APPEALS BOARD

STATE OF WASHINGTON

WILLIAM OSBORNE,

Appellant,

v.

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION,

Respondent.

Case No. ALL0-02-0032

ORDER OF THE BOARD FOLLOWING
HEARING ON EXCEPTIONS TO THE
DETERMINATION OF THE DIRECTOR

Hearing on Exceptions. This appeal came on for hearing before the Personnel Appeals Board, GERALD L. MORGEN, Vice Chair, and BUSSE NUTLEY, Member, on Appellant's exceptions to the director's determination dated October 22, 2002. The hearing was held at the office of the Personnel Appeals Board in Olympia, Washington, on June 26, 2003. WALTER T. HUBBARD, Chair, did not participate in the hearing or in the decision in this matter.

Appearances. Appellant William Osborne was present and appeared *pro se*. Respondent Department of Transportation was represented by Joni Wheeler, Human Resource Consultant.

Background. Appellant submitted a Classification Questionnaire signed on January 7, 2002, requesting that his Information Technology Applications Specialist 5 (ITAS5) position be reallocated to the Information Technology System/Applications Specialist 6 (ITS/AS6) classification. Joni Wheeler, Human Resource Consultant for the Department of Transportation, reviewed Appellant's request and on May 30, 2002, issued a written decision denying Appellant's

1 reallocation request. On June 10, 2002, Appellant filed for a review to the Director of Personnel
2 asserting that his position should have been reallocated to the ITS/AS6 classification.

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4 On September 11, 2002, Paul L. Peterson, Director's Designee, conducted an allocation review. By
5 letter dated October 22, 2002, Mr. Peterson informed Appellant that his position was properly
6 allocated to the ITAS5 classification.

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8 On November 14, 2002, Appellant filed exceptions with the Personnel Appeals Board to the
9 determination of the Department of Personnel.

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11 Appellant's position is located within the Department of Transportation's (WSDOT) Administration
12 and Support / Information Technology Unit. Appellant serves as the technical specialist for
13 WSDOT for the Materials Laboratory and its special application needs. Appellant performs
14 analysis, consulting, design, programming, maintenance, and support of the major, high risk/high
15 impact applications, support products, projects, databases, and database management systems.

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17 **Summary of Appellant's Argument.** Appellant disagreed with the Department of Personnel's
18 determination that his position is properly allocated to the ITAS5 classification. Appellant asserted
19 that his previous supervisor supports his promotion to the ITS/AS6 job classification. Appellant
20 contended that his position had the required designation for the ITS/AS6 classification at one time,
21 but it was unfairly taken away and given to a newly hired subordinate employee with less
22 responsibility. Appellant argued that the agency erred when it did not do a comparison of the work
23 performed by his position versus the newly hired employee who was given the ITS/AS6
24 designation. Appellant asserted that he continues to perform the same work, plus more, as he
25 performed when his position was designated to be at the ITS/AS6. Appellant contended that
26 WSDOT is avoiding and abusing the intent of the "highest" level rule that only one position can be

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2 designated as the “highest” level authority in an information technology area. Appellant argued that
3 the agency is justifying their avoidance and abuse of the intent of the rule by writing multiple
4 ITS/AS6 designation letters for positions with “special functions” within the agency.

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6 **Summary of Respondent’s Argument.** Respondent argued that there is no difference between the
7 ITAS5 and ITS/AS6 job duties except the required written designation as defined in the ITS/AS6
8 distinguishing characteristics section of the job class specification. WSDOT has developed a
9 process of requiring a written designation memo before a position can be designated to the ITS/AS6
10 level. Respondent asserted that Appellant’s supervisor disagreed with Appellant’s duties as stated
11 in the classification questionnaire and attached his comments. Respondent contended that
12 Appellant’s supervisor refused to provide a written memo to designate Appellant’s position to the
13 ITS/AS6 job classification. Respondent argued that there is already a designated ITS/AS6 level
14 position within the area of information technology project management methodology. Respondent
15 asserted that Appellant’s position is properly allocated to the ITAS5 job classification.

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17 **Primary Issue.** Whether the director’s determination that Appellant’s position is properly allocated
18 to the ITAS5 classification should be affirmed.

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20 **Relevant Classifications.** Information Technology Applications Specialist 5, Class Code 03295;
21 Information Technology System/Applications Specialist 6, Class Code 03286.

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23 **Decision of the Board.** The purpose of a position review is to determine which classification best
24 describes the overall duties and responsibilities of a position. A position review is neither a
25 measurement of the volume of work performed, nor an evaluation of the expertise with which that
26 work is performed. Also, a position review is not a comparison of work performed by employees in

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2 similar positions. A position review is a comparison of the duties and responsibilities of a particular
3 position to the available classification specifications. This review results in a determination of the
4 class which best describes the overall duties and responsibilities of the position. Liddle-Stamper v.
5 Washington State University, PAB Case No. 3722-A2 (1994).

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7 The Distinguishing Characteristics for the ITS/AS6 state, in part, that: “This is the expert
8 professional level where incumbents are designated in writing by IT/IS management to provide
9 technical and organizational leadership in a specialized area of technology.”

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11 Consistent with our decisions in Griffith v. Dep’t of Ecology, PAB Case No. ALLO-00-0016
12 (2000) and Stash v. Dep’t of Ecology, PAB Case No. ALLO-00-0001 (1999), when a classification
13 specification requires written designation, we must look for a document that confers such a
14 designation upon the position in question. This written documentation can be a formal agency
15 designation form, an approved CQ, or other written documentation. We find no document that
16 confers, as required in the ITS/AS6 specification, written designation for Appellant’s position to be
17 designated at the ITS/AS6 job classification. Because Appellant lacks written designation from the
18 IT/IS management, the scope of duties and level of independence assigned to his position are best
19 described by the ITAS5 classification.

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21 The record supports the decision by the director’s designee that Appellant’s position does not meet
22 the distinguishing characteristics required for the ITS/AS6 job class level.

1 **Conclusion.** Appellant's position is best described by the ITAS5 classification. Appellant's appeal
2 on exceptions should be denied and the director's determination dated October 22, 2002 should be
3 affirmed.

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5 **ORDER**

6 NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that the appeal on exceptions by Appellant is
7 denied and the Director's determination dated October 22, 2002 is affirmed. A copy is attached.

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9 DATED this _____ day of _____, 2003.

10 WASHINGTON STATE PERSONNEL APPEALS BOARD

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12 _____
13 Gerald L. Morgen, Vice Chair

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15 Busse Nutley, Member